



Tracing Joseph Moon

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{1801 - 1875}

By Colin Boylett

In Mid March 2015 Jennifer Kirby, living in Farnborough, Hampshire, made contact through the Church pages on the Etchingham village website. Jennifer is in the process of trying to trace her family, in particular her 3x Great Grandparents, and was planning to visit Etchingham the following week to try and find the grave of her 2x Great Grandfather, and hoped someone at the Church might be able to assist with her search.

This was of interest to me as I have an interest in the village history and I am in the process of recording graves in Etchingham and Hurst Green for a website which assists people in finding the location of family graves across the world, called Find A Grave (www.findagrave.com) so I was already aware of the location of the grave Jennifer was looking for. So I contacted Jennifer and we exchanged a few emails with the details we each knew.

Jennifer knew that Joseph died 9th May 1875 and is buried in Etchingham Churchyard along with his second wife Phoebe who died 8th June 1895, she had so far not been able find where Joseph's parents are buried. Joseph was baptised in Hawkhurst, Kent on 21st June 1801, the son of John and Elizabeth Moon. She is trying to establish the maiden name of Elizabeth and is trying to find when and where John and Elizabeth were born.

Jennifer had found possible family connections in Rotherfield and Hawkhurst and knew of the definite connections in Etchingham and also Burwash so was planning to stay at a B & B locally for a couple of days to continue research, so I agreed to meet up with her at the Church and also try and find some more information prior to her visit.

So the first step was to use my access to ancestry websites to trace Joseph on the census records. Joseph died in 1875 so the last census he would appear on is 1871, so that was the starting point, this shows Joseph is an agricultural labourer living with his wife Phoebe and three of their sons, James, 24, also an agricultural labourer, Frank, 21, is a Hostler (groom or stable hand) and Thomas, 15 [2], a Houseboy. They are listed as living on the Turnpike Road [1] in Garners Cottages, there are six other

families listed as living in the cottages, a total of 32 adults and children. Adjoining sheets on the census record are Church House, the Station Inn [3], Station Cottage, Post Office [4] and the Railway Station, so that helps place the location to a particular area.

Next step, the 1861 census, this shows Joseph and Phoebe with James, Frank and Thomas, also in the household is another son, William, then aged 9 and a daughter Epsie aged 2, later research reveals that Epsie died at the age of 5. Epsie was a fairly common name at the time, derived from Hebrew, meaning "My delight is in she". The 1861 census has less detail than 1871 and just says Etchingham, but most of the family names on the adjacent records match those of 1871, so likely to be the same location, especially as there were very few houses in the village at the time.

Then back in time to 1851, the census shows Joseph and Phoebe with five children Joseph, 22, Samuel, 11, Emily, 8, also James and Frank. The record shows Etchingham Road, adjoining sheets have the same households as 1871, so looks like the same location.

The 1841 census has Joseph living in Hurst Green, very little detail on early census forms, so no exact location. Joseph is a widower, his first wife, Frances (Fanny) Freeland, having died in 1832, he is living with his sons Joseph, 10, John, 8, and daughter Sarah, 12. Also in the household is Phoebe Harmer, then aged 22, and her son Samuel, 2 [5], Joseph married Phoebe in 1845.

So, where in Etchingham was Joseph living? Where were Garners Cottages named on the 1871 census? The census returns for 1851, 1861 and 1871 all show similar households following on from the Moon family entry - Church House {Church House Farm}, The Station Inn, The Post Office, Station Cottage {no longer exists} and the Station, there are only a couple of small buildings on the entries before Garners Cottages.

Some of you may have seen a framed map in the Church which dates to 1898 when there were potential building plots for sale, this map shows all the buildings on the High Street at the time. There are very few shown between Church Lane and Oxenbridge Lane, so not many possible locations for Garners Cottages. One that stands out is what is now known as The Old Cottage, on the 1898 map this is shown as a row of small cottages, as it is on the 1841 Tithe Map. On both of the maps it appears to be four cottages, with 7 families listed in 1871, some of them must have accommodated more than one family. The Tithe Map also shows that a George Garner owned plots of land close to the Old Cottage, so would account for the name of the cottages. George Garner also owned plots of land opposite where Coronation Gardens is now in Hurst Green, so that is likely to be the location when Joseph was listed as living in Hurst Green.

Phoebe was a little more difficult to trace after the death of Joseph but was eventually found on the 1881 census living at the Bell Inn, Burwash working as a Charwoman, her son James is living with her. The 1891 census shows her living in Burwash, no address details, with James and she is listed as a Seamstress, that is all we have found on Phoebe after Joseph's death.

Jennifer visited Etchingham on Tuesday 24th March 2015, having already gathered information on the Rotherfield Moons the previous day, we met up at the Church and spent the next three hours comparing notes and showing Jennifer where Joseph probably lived, after taking suitable refreshments at the Bistro, Jennifer took a stroll around the village and after placing a small potted rose on Joseph's grave went on to continue her research in Hawkhurst. Jennifer plans to work through the information gathered during her visit and hopefully get a bit further with tracing her family roots, I will continue looking for clues and we will compare notes, Jennifer may visit the area again at a later date to look for more leads, we have not yet found any more info for Joseph's parents so that might be part two of the story.

Every visitor to the Church passes Joseph and Phoebe when they visit, their headstone is the large one on the right of the path as you enter the Church porch.

Research continues, so part two of the story may well follow later, looking at the lives of some of Joseph's children, and we may be fortunate enough to have found where Joseph's parents are.

[1] The Turnpike Road is what we now know as the High Street.

[2] Jennifer is a direct descendant of Thomas

[3] The Station Inn later became The Etchingam Arms.

[4] At that time the Post Office was located at what is now the Etchingam Shop & Deli.

[5] It is probable that Joseph is the father of Samuel and Emily, born 1842, on the 1851 census they have the name Moon.

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